

CO-OP COMMUNITY NEWS

From the Parent Advisory Council
of the North Seattle Community College
Cooperative Preschool Program



February 2005

Another Option: Evening Co-ops

BY CHRIS DAVID

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& Teacher, Latona 3-5s Cooperative Preschool

There is a well-kept secret in the North Seattle Co-op System. There are three preschools that have evening sessions. Northgate Toddlers and Northgate Pre-3 to 5s are both located on campus at North Seattle Community College (NSCC), meeting Wednesday nights from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. The third option is Meadowbrook Pre-3s meeting Tuesday nights and Friday mornings at Nathan Hale High School.

The Northgate groups meet at NSCC in beautiful classrooms designed specifically for young children. The Pre-3 to 5s classroom has child-size toilets and low sinks for hand washing. A covered outside play area adjacent to the classrooms is another big plus. The Toddler classroom is spacious, recently remodeled and filled with materials perfect for this age group. The Meadowbrook Pre-3s

classroom is located on the Nathan Hale High School campus next to the newly renovated Meadowbrook Park.

Evening co-ops are very similar to their daytime counterparts; parents

Evening co-ops are ideal for working couples, single parents and busy stay-at-home parents.

work in the classroom and attend parent education classes. They are ideal for working couples, single parents, and very busy stay-at-home parents. More than one parent has said, "I wanted to do a day co-op, but with

a baby at home I didn't know how I could handle it. The evening group is just the answer. My spouse stays home with the baby and I get one-on-one time with my older child." Or, as I hear at Meadowbrook, "My partner comes to class on Tuesday night; I have the night free and Friday mornings, too!"

The Northgate groups, both parent and children, meet once a week.

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2004-2005 Calendar

February

- 7-11 Co-op In-House Registration
- 14 PAC Meeting
- 16-19 Co-op Cross-Over Registration
- 21 Presidents Day (no school)
- 22-25 Mid-Winter Break (no school)

March

- 5 Co-op Open Registration
- 14 PAC Meeting

April

- 11-15 Spring Break (no school)
- 18 PAC Meeting

May

- 9 PAC Meeting
- 30 Memorial Day (no school)

June

- 13 Last day of classes for Seattle Public School students



Registration Dates for Co-op 2005-2006

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| Feb. 7-11 | In-House |
| Feb. 16-19 | Cross-Over |
| March 5 | Open |



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PAC 101:

Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About PAC, Including What's Up with the New Way of Funding the PAC Scholarship

BY LAUREN HOWELL

Parent & PAC Rep, Woodland Park 3-5s Cooperative Preschool

This is the time of year when our co-ops are asked to help resupply the PAC scholarship fund for the following year. It's a big commitment, so it's a good time to review just what it is that the scholarship does and who it benefits. It's also a good time to review how the *funding* of the scholarship is changing this year, and what that means to our co-ops. Finally, it's a good time to highlight what else is done by PAC and how our co-ops benefit from those activities.

PAC Structure & Budget

The NSCC-affiliated Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is organized and run like a co-op. It is comprised of one representative from each of the 39 NSCC co-ops (our "family members") plus a NSCC parent educator/faculty member. We volunteer for board positions and committee jobs. We have by-laws. We meet once a month. Our operating budget comes from annual PAC dues (currently \$66 per co-op x 39 co-ops or about \$2600 for the year). Scholarship money is NOT part of the operating budget—it is separate. The reason PAC exists (aside from being a NSCC requirement) is for the further empowerment of each individual co-op. We gain strength by pooling and sharing resources and wisdom among our 39 member co-ops (representing 750 to 800 families) and combined NSCC parent education faculty.

Parent Education

One critical PAC activity is to provide quarterly parent education seminars and lectures, free to our families and the general public, that feature some of our area's leading experts on

education and childhood development. The Parent Education Committee arranges for speakers to discuss such important topics as sibling rivalry, emotional intelligence, and how to choose a great school for your child and family.

Enrollment Support

The Registration Committee supports co-ops by orchestrating open registration to enroll new children, monitoring openings at individual co-ops and assisting co-ops that need help to fill up those empty slots. A new Marketing Committee was recently created to help publicize the program as a whole, and to create a "toolkit" of materials that can be customized by individual co-ops.

Kindergarten Preparation

PAC's Kindergarten Readiness Committee creates and updates the Kindergarten Readiness Folders that are given to each co-op in the Fall. This comprehensive resource saves co-op parents a great deal of time and energy by providing information about Kindergarten options in the Seattle area. By being available to all co-ops, not just the 3-5s, it's a terrific way for parents to get a head-start on the process.

Communication

The Communication Committee supports our co-ops by helping them better communicate with each other and with the outside world. To that end, this newsletter and our web site (northseattlecoops.org) exist to inform you about important dates, ideas, related classes and seminars,

solutions and techniques from other preschools, teacher openings, fundraising (e.g. promote your wreath sale to all 800 families and/or share fundraising tips). They also work to promote our preschool program to the outside world, encouraging enrollment.

PAC Scholarship

Finally, PAC is committed to making the cooperative preschool experience available to those not otherwise able to afford it. To this end, PAC orchestrates the raising of money for the PAC Scholarship Fund. Qualifying families may receive up to 50% of their co-op tuition costs. The Scholarship Committee works with parent educators to fairly parcel out what is available. Each year, around 80 families, or 10% of our co-op population, are helped in this way. 100% of the money raised for the scholarship fund goes to tuition assistance.

How Scholarships Are Funded

Traditionally, scholarship money was raised through an annual raffle organized by PAC. Last year, after much discussion within PAC and a vote within each of the co-ops (presented to each co-op by its PAC rep), the raffle was disbanded and a new system adopted.

Starting this 2004-5 academic year, each co-op is now responsible for supplying to the PAC scholarship fund an annual "minimum financial commitment" based on the number of families in that co-op.

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PAC 101...

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For this first year, the amount was set at \$20 per family (a figure based on the old raffle requirement of selling at least \$20 of tickets per family). So, for example, a co-op of 20 families will owe \$400 to this year's PAC scholarship fund (due in March).

Power to the Co-ops

How each co-op raises the PAC scholarship money is up to that co-op. In fact, a big part of this new process is about giving back to the co-ops the choice of how to raise funds—something requested by many. A lot of our co-ops have strong fundraising programs already in place that continue year after year with great success; they prefer to use their own program to meet both PAC and internal fundraising goals.

For co-ops that don't have such established programs (e.g., infant and toddler groups), PAC created the Entertainment Book fundraiser as a helpful option. The advantages are many: it is pre-organized, takes place early in the academic year and so can help kick-start a co-op's fundraising, delivers higher profits through pooled resources, and is risk-free (unsold books are simply re-

turned). Finally, resulting proceeds can be used by participating co-ops as they see fit: for example, to meet the PAC scholarship obligation, their own needs, or both. PAC will continue to offer the Entertainment Book fundraiser each Fall.

The Need is Growing

Our co-op community has an impressive history of growing its scholarship fund. In recent years, we've raised and given out around \$16,000 a year in financial support. Unfortunately, the need for assistance continues to grow. In fact, this Winter quarter was the first in recent history in which there was more need than available funds. Scholarships were requested in the amount of \$7,000 but only \$5,425 was awarded. We received 51 applications (5 more than for Winter 2004). Of those, 31 received 100% of their co-op tuition, 16 received 75%, 4 received 50% and one application was turned down.

Beyond the Minimum

Because of this growing need, PAC is encouraging co-ops to contribute *more* than their minimum obligation—just as when, with the raffle, many of us sold more than

our required 20 tickets. If all co-ops meet but don't exceed their minimum obligation, next year's fund will be \$15,000 or so — \$6,000 short of a projected \$21,000 in requests (assuming we give the full %50 of tuition, and applicant numbers are close to this year's). PAC would then need to reassess, and perhaps look to increase, the minimum financial contributions for next year.

We Shall Overcome

Any time changes are made to an established system, some confusion and hiccups are bound to occur. PAC has given back the power of choice in fundraising. The onus is now on us to ensure that our impressive legacy of taking care of "our own" continues to thrive and grow. I've no doubt we will succeed. After all, we are co-op parents. We make great things happen!

Questions or Concerns

Feel free to discuss any of these topics with your PAC rep. Your co-op may also wish to contact the PAC Board Chair, Jennifer Paris, directly with questions about its scholarship financial commitment. Jennifer may be reached at (206)789-6975 or parisismoe@comcast.net. ♥

Our Neighbors, Ourselves Stories of Scholarship Recipients

- A single mom, working part-time to stay as involved as possible in her child's life, gets no support from her child's father. Her expenses usually exceed her income. She and her child participate fully in their co-op, which considers them a great asset to the group.
- A father of two young children was laid off from his job; he searched for over a year before finding work again, at less pay. The family was very active in co-op; the mother was on the Board.
- A child was home with her parents until joining a 3-5s co-op. The mother worked full-time while the father was a full-time graduate student. The family found the co-op experience greatly beneficial.
- A recent immigrant, a single mom, was living with relatives while she went to school to improve her English and chances for employment. She had no income and could not participate in preschool without a scholarship. She was very active in her co-op.
- A mother who was the wage earner in the family was missing several months of work due to surgery. She was compensated just partially for lost wages. The family was a great asset to their co-op.
- After being laid off, a father of two went back to school and his wife began to look for work. Eight months later she had multiple interviews but no offers. Their parent educator described them as a wonderful addition to the class. ♥

Evening Co-ops...

Continued from Page 1

One week the parent stays on the floor as an assistant teacher in the classroom. The next week the parent attends a parent education discussion group with a parent instructor from the college. The toddler parents meet for parent education in the childrens' classroom. The Pre-3 to 5 adults meet in a room down the hall from their childrens' classroom, just the right amount of separation. During discussion time parents get to know each other, share current issues going on in their children's lives and discuss child development. There is much relief when adults realize that their child's behavior is normal development. People share what works for their child and we all learn from each other. Because many couples attend together, some discussion sessions are focused on couples issues. Parents look forward to parent education every other week.

The Northgate Pre-3 to 5s includes a wide age range, so often siblings come to class together. There is a family feel to the evening groups. One family commented on the great activities provided for their child and how their child looks forward to coming each week. Adults felt relaxed because they know the space is safe for their child to play. They can sit back and watch their child explore, discover and learn. With a smile, Dad said, "It is such a nice place to be."

The evening groups have a large number of fathers attending which is a wonderful for the children. As a parent educator, it is exciting to see

the fathers play and relate with the children. As one Dad said, "This is my time to be with my daughter. I wouldn't give it up."

Diane Broderick, teacher for the toddler group, commented, "One evening we had mostly dads. We marched to a song, ringing our bells. Here were scientists, lawyers and construction workers still in their work clothes marching around together, being role models for their children." What a priceless gift!

"Isn't it too late to for the children?" This is a question often asked about the evening groups. Once in a while a child will fall asleep in the car on the way to school, but not too often. The children really look forward to school. Parents are very ingenious about the late hour. I have seen parents put their children in sleepers at school and brush their

teeth before leaving class. That way they move their sleeping child right from the car and into bed.

So if you hear a parent say, "I would love to do co-op with my child, but I just don't have the time," you can respond: "Have you heard about the three evening co-ops offered through North Seattle Community College? It just may be the right co-op for you!" ♥

NSCC Co-op Preschool Openings for 2004-05*

	Co-op	Openings	Contact	Phone
Pre-3s	Ingraham	8	Anita Wooster	789.9186
	Meadowbrook	4	Monica Mace	522.0274
	Northgate PM	7	Jill Petro	706.1113
3-5s	Broadview	3	Erika Larimer	425.774.6571
	Meadowbrook	4	Suzie Rinne	523.6003
	Northgate	7	Jill Petro	706.1113
	Sandhurst	3	Andrea Baumgarten	527.2886
	Wallingford AM	4	Lisa Drake	632.9817
	Wallingford PM	2	Ann Weber	632.0646
Fives	Meadowbrook	8	Sara McCoy	524.2209
Web Link	To view current listings and for descriptions of each co-op, please go to our web site at: northseattlecoops.org *current as of 02-10-05			

CO-OP PRESCHOOL TEACHER OPENING

University-Ravenna Cooperative Preschool is seeking a teacher for its 3-5 year old program beginning Fall of 2005. Three mornings and one afternoon per week. Experience with children in a group setting required. AA/CDA/BA in ECE or related field preferred. Excellent salary and benefits.

Contact Leann Johnson at 206-525-9593 or ljedit@juno.com for more information. Accepting resumes through February 28, 2005.EOE.

Contact

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NSCC Cooperative Preschool Program

northseattlecoops.org

206.527.3783 (NSCC Parent Ed Office)

